

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0512

August 16, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Austin,

During the January 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, at least 140 law enforcement officers, including at least 81 U.S. Capitol Police (USCP) Officers, were assaulted, and as of June, at least 17 law enforcement officers, including at least 10 USCP officers, have not returned to duty due to injuries sustained on that terrible day.¹ The Chairman of the Capitol Police Union reported that an officer lost the tip of his finger, one officer had two cracked ribs, two shattered spinal discs, and one was stabbed with a metal fence stake.² Some have experienced traumatic brain injury (TBI), and many more are suffering from emotional trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder.³ Four law enforcement officers who responded to the unimaginable events at the Capitol on January 6 have died by suicide and another officer surrendered her weapon, fearing she might use it on herself.⁴ In fact, Capitol Police Sergeant Aquilino Gonell told the January 6 Select Committee that his experience protecting the Capitol on January 6 was worse than anything he faced during his Army deployment to Iraq.

As you no doubt are aware, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center operates a best-in-class treatment program for TBI. Members of Congress routinely receive care at Walter Reed when necessary, but the Capitol Police and other law enforcement officers injured in the January 6 attacks do not currently have this access. We believe that law enforcement officers who were

¹ Tom Jackman, "Police union says 140 officers injured in Capitol riot," *The Washington Post*, January 27, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/police-union-says-140-officers-injured-in-capitol-riot/2021/01/27/60743642-60e2-11eb-9430-e7c77b5b0297_story.html; Michael Caplan and Cassidy McDonald, "At least 17 police officers remain out of work with injuries from the Capitol attack," *CBS News*, June 4, 2021, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/capitol-police-injuries-riot/>.

² Michael S. Schmidt and Luke Broadwater, "Officers' Injuries, Including Concussions, Show Scope of Violence at Capitol Riot," *New York Times*, Feb. 11, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/11/us/politics/capitol-riot-police-officer-injuries.html>.

³ Peter Hermann, "'Some are still suffering': Months after Capitol riot, police who fought the mob contend with physical, psychological pain," *The Washington Post*, July 24, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/public-safety/capitol-riot-police-injuries-trauma/2021/07/23/e008f0f0-d8d8-11eb-9bbb-37c30dcf9363_story.html.

⁴ Whitney Wild, Paul LeBlanc, and Rashard Rose, "2 more DC police officers who responded to the Capitol insurrection have died by suicide," *CNN*, August 3, 2021, <https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/02/politics/dc-metropolitan-police-officer-suicide-january-6-capitol-riot/index.html>.

injured on January 6 should have the option of seeking medical treatment at Walter Reed for injuries sustained in the attack, including TBI.

We understand that you have broad authority under 10 U.S.C. § 1074(c) and the regulation-based Secretarial Designee program to allow individuals, who are not otherwise eligible, to access military medical care when it serves a compelling DoD mission interest.⁵ We believe there is a clear, compelling interest in these circumstances given that the actions of law enforcement officers on January 6 complemented and supported the deployment of National Guardsmen, as directed by the Secretary of the Army, in defense of the seat of the legislative branch of the U.S. government, and that historically DoD has treated the health care of civilians injured while supporting the operations of military personnel in an official capacity as a compelling DoD mission interest. We request that you use this authority to allow law enforcement officers injured in the line of duty on January 6, 2021—including U.S. Capitol Police and other federal, state, and District of Columbia police—to participate in the Secretarial Designee program for the purposes of receiving treatment at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Liz Cheney
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Don Bacon
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Jason Crow
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

_____/s/
William R. Keating
Member of Congress

_____/s/
James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

_____/s/
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Grace Meng
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

⁵ Part 108 of Title 32, Code of Federal Regulations; DoD Instruction 6025.23.

_____/s/
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress

_____/s/
Maxine Waters
Member of Congress